

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
DIRECTOR OF EXTENSION WORK
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A National 4-H Soil Conservation Program has been operating successfully for 6 years. During that time, it is believed, a foundation has been prepared for a greatly enlarged program in soil and water conservation. Three meetings of representatives of the Cooperative Extension Service, the Soil Conservation Service, the National Committee on Boys and Girls Club Work, and the Firestone Tire & Rubber Co. have been held. There was participation of State Extension Soil Conservation people from Oklahoma, Michigan, West Virginia, Montana, Washington, Ohio, and Maryland. What this program might be has been critically examined.

The group arrived at the following conclusions pertaining to a course of action for expanding and improving 4-H Club work in soil conservation:

- (1) The National 4-H Soil Conservation Program should be revised to provide separate sections of suggested activities for the younger and older members adjusting recognition to this age grouping and increasing emphasis on local awards.
 - (a) Enrollment insignia such as a lapel button, appropriate pin, and patches for coats or shirts should be used.
 - (b) Appropriate use should be made of a conservation pledge.
- (2) A guide for leadership training in soil conservation 4-H Club work should be developed. The 4-H Club materials on soil conservation now being used should be assembled in duplicate for reference in writing this guide. A brief analysis of this material might provide a valuable reference for State workers.
- (3) The preparation of suitable State project and activity literature for 4-H Club work in soil conservation should be encouraged.
- (4) The Firestone Tire & Rubber Co. might conduct a company-wide informational program concerning their interest in soil conservation and particularly their interest in 4-H Club awards. Assistance, especially that to local club activities in soil conservation, by company staff members and local dealers, should be outlined.
- (5) A slidefilm on Youth and Soil Conservation should be prepared.
- (6) Stories of 4-H Club experiences with soil conservation should be assembled for use both in the States and for area and Nation-wide publicity.
- (7) A story on leaders and soil conservation should be published in Soil Conservation, the official magazine of the Soil Conservation Service, and reprinted separately for widespread distribution.

- (8) 4-H Club work in soil conservation and leader development should be pictorialized on the back cover page of the Extension Service Review. A series of stories should also be published in the Review on county agents' experiences with 4-H Club work in soil conservation.
- (9) The National Association of Soil Conservation District Supervisors should inform soil conservation district governing bodies about 4-H Club work in soil conservation.
- (10) Recognition should be given to the need in some places for additional Extension staff members to promote this phase of the 4-H program.
- (11) Participation by organizations and agencies having interest in this phase of 4-H Club work should be enlisted.
- (12) The participation of girls in 4-H Club soil conservation work should be encouraged. Lists of suggested activities should include those suitable for girls.
- (13) Attention to the development of educational materials especially suited for young people should be encouraged. Cataloging of existing material provides a valuable guide to the development of supplementary material as well as facilitating the more efficient use of that which is now available.

The group recognizes the fact that progress in 4-H Club work in soil conservation depends to a great extent on: (1) Implementation by State extension directors of the work to be undertaken, (2) orientation of the work in soil conservation into the 4-H Club program of the State by the State 4-H Club leader and his staff, and (3) assistance with the development of local initiative in the organizing and leading of soil conservation 4-H Club work in the counties.

In several States, committees for planning and guiding youth activities in soil conservation have accomplished good results. The programs developed by such committees can orient activities in such a way that current and long-time accomplishments will be augmented by the most efficient use of resources available.

According to records of the National Committee on Boys and Girls Club Work, the National 4-H Soil Conservation Program for 1948 had 42,528 members enrolled in projects or activities, 24,726 members participated in the contest, and 527 counties qualified for awards and received medals. Forty-four States accepted the contest, 41 States participated, and 38 States qualified by naming a State winner. Puerto Rico participated and named a Territorial winner. A significant development since the establishment of the National 4-H Soil Conservation Program has been the increase in numbers of members participating from 10,871 in 1944 to 24,726 in 1948. There was an increase in the number of different 4-H Club members who received training in soil and water conservation from 86,200 in 1945 to 161,019 in 1948.

There is an opportunity for larger participation of youth in this phase of 4-H Club work. The situation today is favorable for achieving this

participation. Some of the factors in the favorable situation are:

- (1) Attention to the philosophy and facts about land care in the public schools--4-H Club work can balance the school work with farm practice.
- (2) The widespread demonstration and use of successful soil and water conservation activities--young people can implement a growing adult interest.
- (3) Leadership in local soil conservation programs is vested by State laws in soil conservation districts, of which there were 2,122 as of May 1, 1949, which include three-fourths of all the farms in the United States. The more than 10,000 members of the governing bodies of these districts have a keen appreciation of the significance of favorable experiences in land care by young people.
- (4) Approximately 20,000 representatives of a large industrial organization will be motivated to aid the local efforts in 4-H Club work in soil conservation.
- (5) The growing knowledge that a constructive conservation philosophy must be established to assure the welfare of people--that is, the ultimate objective is not soil and water conservation but the common welfare.

The group feels that soil and water conservation is important because upon it rests the potential productivity of the earth. Soils link plants and people. The life-giving flow of the sun's energy depends upon soil. The heritage to posterity rests on knowledge of this biological fact.

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